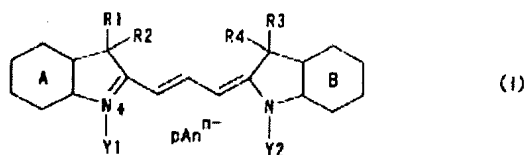


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) A cyanine compound represented by general formula (I):



wherein ring A and ring B each represent a benzene or naphthalene ring that may be substituted; at least one of the pair of adjacent groups R1 and R2 and the pair of adjacent groups R3 and R4 represent a pair of benzyl groups, and the other paired groups each represent an alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms or are connected to each other to form a 3- to 6-membered ring; Y1 and Y2 each represent an organic group having 1 to 30 carbon atoms; An^{m-} represents an m-valent anion; m represents an integer 1 or 2; and p represents a coefficient for maintaining the charge neutrality.

2. (currently amended) The cyanine compound of claim 1, wherein ~~each of R1, R2, R3, and R4 is a benzyl group~~

both of the pair of adjacent groups R1 and R2 and the pair of adjacent groups R3 and R4 represent a pair of benzyl groups.

3. (original) The cyanine compound of claim 1, wherein ring A

and/or ring B constituting the heterocyclic ring with the adjacent two benzyl groups is a naphthalene ring.

4. (currently amended) An optical recording material containing the cyanine compound of claim 1 wherein, the optical recording material ~~being adapted to be used in an optical recording layer~~ is formed on a substrate to make an optical recording medium.

5. (previously presented) An optical recording medium comprising a substrate and a thin film of the optical recording material of claim 4 on the substrate.